

Tilburg University

The library of the future, ten years on

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The Library of the Future, Ten Years on. A Review

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*Symposium 'The Library of the Future, the Next
10 Years', Tilburg, 21 March 2003*



Content

- The history
- The vision of the Library of the Future
- The Experiences
- Review
- What can we learn?
- What's next?



Tilburg University before 1985

- Focus on growth and extension with more faculties
- No excellence in teaching and research
- Too much mediocrity
- Few international contacts
- Continuous external threats
- Departmental libraries distributed over six locations on campus



Proposal Executive Board in 1985: A new library building

- ONE new library building
- Concentrate all library facilities
- Most faculties agreed



The arguments of the library and the Board in 1985

- Lack of space for open access collections
- Lack of workspace for students
- Current storage locations are inadequate
- Increase of interdisciplinary work
- IT can be used more efficiently in one single building (!)



Some innovative elements already in 1985

- “...in the near future the OPAC can be accessed from the offices and workplaces.... “



How to convince the Dutch Government ? (1986)

- Letters to the Minister of Education emphasized space problems
- Centralisation of library facilities will allow us to have more opening hours and to reduce the number of staff



New University Strategy in 1985

- Stimulate Excellence in Research
- All Faculties should be one of the Top 3 of their kind nation-wide
- Create attractive learning environment
- Make better use of new Information Technologies
- Intensify internationalization



First ideas for a new kind of Library (1988)

- Bridge the gap between ‘technological innovation’ and ‘the library’
- Use IT for storage, analysis, retrieval, access and processing of information
- Focus on end-user services
- Flexible building with high-tech character
- Hundreds of PC’s in the library for hundreds of users
- Emphasis on intermediary role for library staff



Vision document (1989)

- ‘The aim is the implementation of the personal computerized workplace and the integration on the workplace in order to support...education and research’
- ...’’ a pilot project...’’
- ‘...the library as a highly advanced documentation and information centre.’



Vision document (2)

- "Library users will no longer be library visitors"
- "Within a few years, a student population will have reached the university that simply expects to be able to consult library material using a workstation in whatever form it may take"
- "Central element in the concept is personally oriented information management"



Explaining the vision to the University (June 1989)

- We will move to ONE building, but the information can be accessed from the offices
- Only PC to access various types of information
- Goal is to stimulate research and publishing
- Students can write theses using desktop facilities
- Researchers can write papers and articles: direct link between production and consumption of information
- Development of the “**Integrated Desktop**”



What is distinctive in this concept ? (1989)

- Various separate elements have been realized or are in development elsewhere, but....
- There is nowhere ONE integrated concept with fully OPERATIONAL services for the end-users
- What we will develop, will become available for everyone, campuswide using our well developed infrastructure
- Deliberate goal was to stimulate other libraries: “It should be a showcase for others”



Why at Tilburg University? (1989)

- “The University has earned a favourable name”
- Library management has developed a vision
- The opportunity to have a new library building
- The infrastructure: high level of standardization of network and computing facilities



Cooperation (1989 – 1992)

- Core was the cooperation between the Library and the Computing Centre
- Cooperation with groups in the University
- In the first phase cooperation with Digital Eq., Pica, Verity, SPC, Elsevier Science, Carnegie Mellon University, the Royal Library
- First EC projects with Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the University of Patras



New Library

- Opened in 1992
- Transparent access to collections
- Many library staff in central area
- Fully wired
- 900 workplaces, 450 PC's for students
- First results of innovative projects available



Innovations at Tilburg University in 1992

- All PC's acted as “integrated desktops”
- Network printing in the library
- Online contents database (scanning & OCR)
- KubGuide: navigating to various databases
- Lendomaat: self service check-in and check-out



Important developments after 1992

- First site licence agreement with Elsevier Science
- Images on the desktop campuswide
- E-Access to working papers
- Video bank
- European cooperation (Elise I and II, Decomate I and II, T-ECUP)
- Simultaneous searching in heterogeneous databases: Development of Decomate project \Rightarrow iPORT



What was not realized in the 90s ?

- Electronic Learning Environments and Distance learning
- Departmental Research projects as defined in original action plans, a.o. automated indexing and abstracting



Tilburg Library as A Model for Europe?

- T
- S



The library as an asset for the University

- Excellent use of the new services (off site) and of the library (on site)
- Library and IT services contribute to the performance of the university
- S



Content

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Why was it successful?

- Vision
- Cooperation between Library and Computer Centre
- A pro-active Executive Board
- Support from Dutch Government
- Co-operation with others
- People, a good mix and the right qualities

International Cooperation (in Economics) in EC project Decomate

- Tilburg University
- Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
- London School of Economics
- European University Institute (Florence)
- Silverplatter
- Elsevier, Kluwer
- Swets/Blackwell

Important change of the library was realized by

- Staff development and training programmes
- Gradual involvement of staff in new projects
- Demonstrate that library can change and can develop new services which are highly appreciated by the users



Gradual move to the Digital Library

- In 70s and 80s focused on back office activities (more efficiency and staff savings)
- Online Catalogue first user oriented IT service in libraries
- In 1989 launch of first Digital Library project in Europe (Tilburg University)



The Digital Library approach

- Library in the Centre
- Still important role for the “library as a place”
- Libraries started to make “their” information available online
- Gradual move towards virtual library
- Access to electronic information is no longer connected with THE library



User experiences

- Use of (electronic) information has increased tremendously
- Libraries did not become Museums but lively study centres
- Users want more and more: studyplaces, Internet Cafes, more online, faster network etc.



Major changes in the past 10 years

- Access over the network from anywhere and at any time
- Move to virtual collections, move from ownership to access
- Direct communication between authors and readers
- Increasing power of the user



University Libraries in Europe: some trends

- Less government money to culture and education
- Interests in “skills” and “needs-based” education
- Increasing interest of governments and universities in E-learning, E-publishing and E-science
- More competition AND more cooperation



Trends in E-publishing

- University Libraries are supporting their students and researchers in the E-publishing process for teaching and research
- University output on the Web, but organised, well selected and properly (linking, interoperability)



Various types of users, different demands

- Significant differences between needs of undergraduates and graduates
- Differences between young researchers and professors with established reputation
- Differences between subject areas



Challenges for Universities and Libraries

- **More co-operative activities** between universities nationally and across borders on E-Learning, E-Publishing and Open Archives: common infrastructure and tools; content and quality of people and of the place will make the difference
- **Personalised portals** for individuals and groups focused on course information, research information and management information.



New Challenges for Universities

- Consistent organisation of the information environment of the university
- Clarify role in E-Learning and E-Publishing
- Coherent IT infrastructure for teaching, learning, research and administration
- Profiling and Customizing information (in line with trends in teaching, learning, research and business)
- Close cooperation between Library and IT Center is required



Conclusions

- More integration within the university
- More cooperation between universities on licenses, tools, IT infrastructure and E-archiving
- Libraries will have a (bright) future if they can continue to provide added value